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Statewide Mailer Identifies 1 in 4 Indiana Voter Records may be Inaccurate

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Indianapolis, IN - Today, Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita announced that the state's mailer designed to identify and remove inaccurate voter records has found more than one million records that may be incorrect, affirming that the state's voter rolls are seriously inflated. The state has sent a follow-up mailer to the addresses on those records requesting confirmation that the voter no longer lives at that location, in accordance with federal law.

In an effort to clean up the inaccuracies on the state's voter list, Indiana's Election Division sent more than 4.3 million post cards to the addresses listed on every Indiana voter record. The mailing was designed to automatically return-to-sender all registrations that are no longer accurate. **While initial estimates were that 675,000 postcards would be returned to the state, the final number posted by the July 21 deadline came to 1,018,008. Undeliverable postcards continue to roll in after the deadline, with more than 70,000 additional cards collected to-date. Unfortunately, due to delays in getting one of the state's two major political parties to sign off on the cleanup plan, the additional postcard records cannot be removed until 2010.**

"These initial returns suggest that as many as 1 in 4 registrations are no longer accurate," Rokita said. "Hoosier voters deserve a voter file that is accurate and protects the integrity of our electoral process. We have an obligation to the taxpayer to reduce the funds used to purchase voting equipment and pay poll workers - all of which have been based on what we now see are vastly exaggerated numbers!"

After the Secretary of State's office initially identified more than 290,000 potential duplicate registrations from old county lists in its newly implemented statewide voter file system, Rokita called on state Democrats and Republicans to sign off on the mailer designed to clean up Indiana's voter rolls. Though state Democrats initially refused to consent to the plan, they eventually did so more than a month after the initial deadline and under the threat of litigation from the U.S. Department of Justice, which agreed with Rokita's proposal. Due to the delay, the timeframe for the mailings was greatly reduced.

Rokita notes that the second mailing requires recipients to answer whether or not that voter lives at the recorded address. The return postage is paid by the state, and the only individuals who should receive the second mailing are those who have forwarding addresses or where some error occurred by the Postal Service during the first mailing.

Rokita's plan follows the timeline prescribed by the federal National Voter Registration Act and gives potential inactive voters two notices to let election officials know they continue to live at their current address and want to stay on the rolls. If the second notice is also returned as undeliverable, the voter registration is placed on an "inactive" list. An eligible voter can reactivate their status simply by voting in any of the 2006, 2007 or 2008 primary or general elections. If they do not, only then after 2008 will that invalid registration be fully removed from the rolls.

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